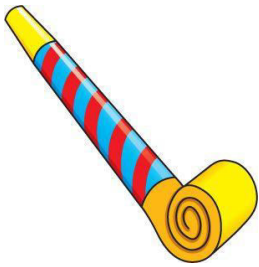


January Newsletter

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CASA Advocates and Coaches: **Welcome to 2017 and Welcome to EDMS**

The pilot project for EDMS access for our CASA Advocates and Coaches has been a success. We are so very pleased to offer our Advocates and Coaches the opportunity to access their CASA cases in the court system's Electronic Document Management System (EDMS). Thank you to our pilot project members and their advocates and coaches for helping us create a smooth transition for all CASA volunteers and staff across the state.

We're ready for our CASA Advocates and Coaches to begin setting up accounts and accessing cases.

Here are a few **tips** for you to remember as we begin this process:

1. All CASA Advocates and Coaches MUST have an EDMS account.

- The Clerk of Court has a mandate to notify all parties on a case each time there is a change made.
- The Advocate/Coach EDMS process officially replaces the former rules of notification.

2. You can elect not to access your case on EDMS, but you still need an account.

- If you choose to continue to have documents copied and mailed or emailed to you, please talk with your Coordinator to have this arranged.

3. If you have an EDMS account for professional or other personal reasons, you still need a separate EDMS account for your CASA work.

4. It can take up to two weeks to achieve FULL secure access to your case.

- The process goes smoothly, but not always as quickly as our advocates and coaches have wanted.

If you don't have an EDMS account set up for your CSASA work, please contact your coordinator to receive the User Guide. If your account is established, don't forget to notify your CASA Coordinator to let them know your username and ICIS number.

Thanks so much for your patience with us and enjoy this new system! Be sure to look for future EDMS tips in upcoming issues of *CAB Connection*.

Trainer's Corner

For FCRB Members & CASA Advocates: **Resolutions - Setting Goals to Advocate Smarter**



How can setting goals help advocacy efforts?

As Advocates, our primary goal is to advocate for what is in the best interest of children in the child welfare system. What is specifically in the best interest of each child is individualized to that child and family, but each child deserves to have their needs met, to be safe, and have positive well-being.

How we advocate for those best interests is dependent upon our specific program role. What is similar for both the CASA and FCRB Advocate is that by setting SMART goals for *how* we advocate, we are more likely to be a successful partner in meeting the desired outcomes of children being safe from re-abuse and neglect.

How we implement SMART goals entails making our individual plans for our advocacy efforts. Maybe our plan includes resolving to read all the updated FCRB information and reports and planning our FCRB review questions a week in advance of the Board Review day. Perhaps it's resolving to outline on our CASA Action Plan our concerns and questions for gathering additional information to be shared with our Coach or Coordinator every month to improve the type of information gathered for a report.

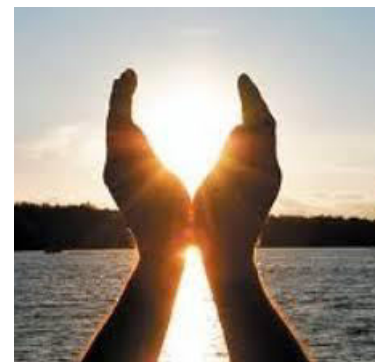
Perhaps you would like to learn more about how to advocate for older youth. Please make your goal to contact your coordinator to register for an upcoming **Fostering Futures Training in Sioux City on February 9th or West Des Moines February 25.**



Watch Video: [Five Rules of Goal Setting: How to set SMART, Motivating Personal Goals](https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/smart-goals.htm) Learn more by visiting MindTools at <https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/smart-goals.htm>

Other unexpected videos that may inspire you to make a New Year's resolution or help you formulate the perfect resolution: *(click on the link)*

[All it takes is 10 mindful minutes](#)
[Power of Vulnerability](#)



Your body language shapes who you are
Happiness

For CASA Advocates: In-Service Training Credit

If you would like to learn more about additional ways to engage youth on asset building and goal setting, please consider reading: [Additional Ways to Engage Youth.pdf](#)

To receive credit following completion, contact the ICAB State Training Specialist at lesa.christianson@dia.iowa.gov and share how you plan on utilizing this information within your advocacy role.



For new or seasoned CASA Advocates, for more training on what action steps you can take when assigned to a case to gather useful objective information, request our **Gathering Information** training from your Local Coordinator.



ICAB Recruitment

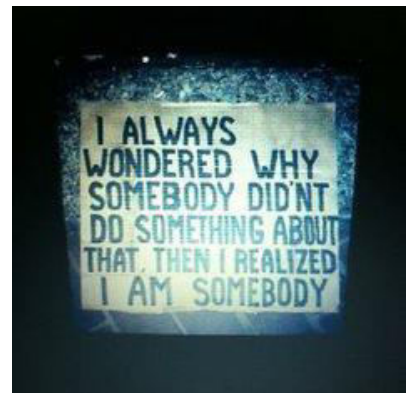
The Perfect New Year's Resolution

New Year's resolutions typically focus on self-improvement: lose weight, stop smoking, exercise more often. This year, why not resolve to do something even more lasting: improve the life of a child who's suffered abuse and neglect?

Many of you reading this are already volunteers with the Iowa Child Advocacy Board. Others may be interested in becoming a volunteer or are community partners who work with our volunteers. You already know that CASA Advocates and FCRB Reviewer volunteers come from all walks of life and professions and have one thing in common: they care about kids.

The most frequent reason given by our volunteers regarding their motivation for being involved in these programs is an overwhelming motivation to help children. The other highest responses suggest that volunteers want to meet the needs of the community; to effect positive change in the community; and to use and develop their knowledge and talents.

Our volunteers, as community ambassadors, are the most visible face of the CASA and FCRB programs. As the face of the program you serve, you are ideally suited to share this opportunity with others with the same motivation and passion to make a difference. If you are a community partner, a Judge, a service provider or an interested reader, we are asking that you, too, resolve to consider



who you know with a servant's heart; someone who shares the passion and commitment of our CASA Advocate and FCRB Reviewers.

Then share how they, too, can make a real, lasting change in the coming year.

The following information can help you formulate an effective message that will attract potential volunteers with similar motivations. The ICAB volunteer programs (CASA and FCRB) offer volunteers unique experiences and opportunities, including the following:

- Active participation in the court and child welfare system that produces significant and positive results in the life of a child.
- Experience that may apply toward career advancement.
- Increased knowledge of child welfare issues and the court process.
- Belonging to a group of individuals who are concerned with similar issues.
- Being active and involved in the community.
- Making professional contacts in the field of child welfare.
- The opportunity to help improve life for a child.



We are currently recruiting for the following scheduled trainings:

Feb. 24-25 in Council Bluffs

March 3-4 in West Des Moines

March 24-25 Sioux City

April 7-8 Cedar Rapids

(an additional 11 trainings will be offered across the State, throughout the year).

To learn more about how you can help us make a difference in the life of an abused or neglected child here in Iowa, contact us in one of the following ways:

by calling 866-469-2522

visit <https://childadvocacy.iowa.gov/>

or visit iamforthechildiowa.com

When a community rises together, we can do great things. Let's resolve to make 2017 a safe and happy year for the children of Iowa!

"Every child deserves
a champion -
An adult who never
gives up on them"



Rita Pierson



Ways to Engage Youth: Identifying Assets and Goal Setting



You have become a CASA Advocate at least in part because you want to make a positive difference in the life of a young person. By identifying assets in each youth and helping youth set goals around each asset you can make a difference in youth development.

You can think about assets as “nutrients” that are necessary for a child to grow a strong mind and character. Knowing more about Developmental Assets can equip you to be an even more effective CASA Advocate, because the framework gives CASA Advocate tools and ideas for building on the strengths of Youths and helping them overcome difficulties and become caring, responsible adults.

Simply but powerfully, assets build the “good stuff” in kids and help them resist the “bad stuff.” Research done by Search Institute, a nonprofit research organization based in Minneapolis, Minnesota, has shown that the more assets young people have, the more likely they are to be leaders in their community, succeed in school, and maintain good health- all outcomes we want for kids. Just as important, the more assets young people have, the more likely they are to resist risky behaviors, such as drugs, skipping school, or fighting.

Assets don't just happen as part of growing up. They are built for and with children through all of the caring relationships they have at home and in their communities. CASA Advocates, teachers, coaches, youth directors, neighbors, and employers all have opportunities to help young people be stronger.

EXTERNAL ASSETS



Support



Empowerment



Boundaries &
Expectations



Constructive Use of Time

INTERNAL ASSETS



Commitment to Learning



Positive Values



Social Competencies



Positive Identity

Assets are grouped into two main types: external and internal assets. The external assets are the good qualities of life young people get from the world around them. The internal assets are the traits, behaviors, and values that help kids make positive choices and be better prepared for challenging situations. Internal assets are like the internal compass that helps guide them. These two types of assets are divided into eight categories of human development that make it easier to think about activities to build them.

This information also provides transferable skills for Possible Selves Activity.

External Assets

Support is about youth having people and places that make them feel cared about and welcome. Think about providing your Youth with opportunities to experience support from numerous nonfamily adults, positive family communication, and a caring neighborhood.

Empowerment is about young people feeling valued for who they are and being given opportunities to shine. It's also about feeling safe, because it's tough to be your best if you feel scared. Think about ways you can provide your Youth with opportunities to experience empowerment by being in a safe environment and providing service to others.

Boundaries and Expectations are about knowing and understanding the rules of behavior in families, schools, and communities. This category is also about adults and peers encouraging young people to be their best. Think about ways you can provide your Youth with opportunities to experience boundaries and expectations through adult role models, family, positive peer influences, and high expectations.

Constructive Use of Time is about youth having people and activities in their lives that are fun *and* challenging. It is also about having high-quality time at home. Think about ways you can provide your Youth with opportunities to experience constructive use of time through creative activities, religious community, and time at home.

Internal Assets

Commitment to Learning is about doing well in school, but it is also about taking advantage of all opportunities to learn whenever they happen. Think about ways you can provide your Youth with opportunities to experience a commitment to learning through achievement motivation, doing homework, and reading for pleasure.

Positive Values define who young people are and how they interact with others. Think about ways you can provide your Youth with opportunities to experience positive values such as integrity, honesty, and responsibility.

Social Competencies are about getting along with all kinds of people and being able to navigate through the rough waters of decision making in today's society. Think about ways you can provide your Youth with opportunities to experience social competencies such as friendship skills and peaceful conflict resolution.

Positive Identity is about a youth feeling good about themselves and knowing they can succeed in life. It's about looking forward to the future. Think about ways you can provide your Youth with opportunities to experience positive identity building her or his self-esteem, sense of purpose, and personal view of the future.

Key Principles of Asset Building

When adults make deliberate efforts to help young people increase the number and degree of Developmental Assets they experience in their lives, it is called *asset building*. If you focus your energy on finding ways to help a Youth build these commonsense “assets” through your relationship, you stand a good chance in making a difference in his or her life.

Below are some general principles you can use to help your Youth (or any young person in your life) successfully build Developmental Assets.



- **Everyone can help young people build assets-** not just parents, teachers, and people with college degrees in child and youth development. Whether you are an electrician or a singer, you have the power to be a positive influence in the life of a young person.
- **All young people need assets.** Search Institute’s research shows that almost all young people need more assets than they have. Young people may have a lot of friends, or achieve high marks in school, but they may be lacking in other areas. CASA Advocates can help them identify strengths and build the assets that are missing in their lives.
- **Relationships are key.** Strong relationships between adults and young people, between young people and their peers, and between teenagers and children are central to building assets. As a CASA Advocate, you have a significant opportunity to make a difference in your Youth’s life, just by being there for him.
- **Asset building is an ongoing process.** It starts when a child is born and continues through high school and beyond. It’s never too late to start building assets with and for your Youth, regardless of her age or what her life has been like up until now.
- **Consistent messages are important.** It is important for families, schools, communities, and others to give young people consistent and similar messages about what is important and what is expected of them. CASA Advocates can play a critical role in exposing young people to positive messages, values, and examples; these messages can be modeled in action by the way you live your life and by the way you and your Youth interact with each other and the world around you.
- **Intentional repetition is important.** Assets must be continually reinforced across the years and in all areas of a young person’s life. As a significant adult in your Youth’s life, you have a great opportunity to continually reinforce the positive messages and experiences he needs throughout his life- and beyond.

All young people have gifts, talents, and potential. They may not know how to act on those strengths, or, for whatever reason, they may not choose to channel their strengths

in productive ways. Perhaps they are insecure about their potential to achieve success, or perhaps their view of success is just too narrow, limited to people like professional athletes, musicians, actors, corporate CEOs, or doctors.

An important role CASA Advocates can play with Youths is to help them define success as making choices that open the doors to numerous options for their future, rather than choosing to engage in activities that close doors.

When thinking about helping a young person see her or his potential for a brighter future, consider the ideas below for building assets. They may need to be modified depending on the role you play in the youth's life.

External Assets

Support

- **Let your Youth know when you “catch” him doing something impressive.**



Be specific about what actions you thought were impressive and how they could help him move forward. For example: “I am really impressed with how you made sure your homework was done before we got together today. It shows me that learning is a priority for you, and that you

have good time management skills. The people at my work who get the most respect are the ones who are always taking the initiative to learn and who can juggle their schedule to get a lot done.”

Empowerment

- **Encourage your Youth to take the initiative to plan at least half of your outings**, including how you'll get there and what you'll do once you're there. Follow her lead.
- Help your Youth channel his gifts and interests into a volunteer, job shadow, or internship experience. If he enjoys surfing the web, suggest that he volunteer at a senior center or library helping older people or young children learn how to get around on the Internet. Is she good at fixing bikes? Suggest that she work with her school to find an internship experience with a bike repair shop.



Boundaries and Expectations

- **Help your Youth meet people who are in careers he is interested in pursuing.** Do some research together on what it takes to succeed in that field, and what someone realistically needs to do to enter that field. This can be a fine balance between encouraging your Youth to

**BOUNDARIES AND
EXPECTATIONS**

dream big and helping him be realistic. He may want to be a professional basketball player, so help him find out all he can about what paths pro ballplayers take to make it to the top (e.g. summer camps and college plays). At the same time, he needs to know that only a very small percentage of people who play basketball become professionals. He needs to know that some people make it to the professional level, only to have their career ended at a very young age by an injury. What would happen then?

Constructive Use of Time

- **Encourage your Youth to take activities she has always done to the next level.** Has she been a member of the Boys and Girls Club for a long time? Help her pursue leadership and volunteer activities within the club. Perhaps she has been active in her congregation's youth programs; maybe now is a good time to think about volunteering to teach or assist in a religious class for young children.



Internal Assets

Commitment to Learning

- **Expose your Youth to other worlds through reading.** Start your own book club. Is he interested in learning more about Africa? Go to your library or on the Internet to find books about Africa; watch a movie that is set in Africa; and look up information about a particular country's people, government, or cultures. Talk about ways your Youth could someday visit Africa, maybe through a study abroad program at a university, volunteering through the Peace Corps, or saving up for an African safari on his own or with friends. Investigate those possibilities; collect pictures and information in a notebook that the Youth can refer to often to keep his interest active.



Positive Values

- Does your Youth have a passion for promoting equality and justice? **Help her think about ways she can channel that passion into action, both now and in**



the future. This could be in the form of volunteering at a local organization that promotes these issues, joining an online community that supports the rights of others, or pursuing career options for promoting justice, from social work and advocacy to law and politics.

- **Talk about ethics in the workplace.** When news headlines talk about executives who stole funds from their companies or a politician who accepted a bribe, use it as an opportunity to engage your Youth in a discussion about right and wrong in the workplace.



Social Skills

Social Competencies

- If your Youth is considering getting a job, **help her build skills such as answering interview questions and writing a resume.** If you don't feel confident about your own skills in this area, try finding a related community education class to take together.
- **Talk about instances when you have encountered conflict or other difficult situations** in your own life. How did you handle them? In hindsight, what would you have done differently?

Positive Identity

- **See your Youth as a whole person.** Always view your Youth as a person with possibilities. Avoid focusing only on the obstacles in his life.
- **Help your Youth find her sense of purpose in life.** Connect her gifts, talents, and interests with potential ways she can use them to launch a career, have a happy family, or change the world.



Goal Setting

In order to create the kind of life the youth wants, it helps to have a clear picture of where they are headed — their personal mission. It's equally important to make a plan on how to get there — how to make dreams come true, one day at a time. To help the youth do that it is a good idea to learn how to set goals and objectives. Goals are the things you want to do over the next several years. Objectives are the smaller steps you're going to take —

tomorrow, next week, next month — to get there.

Writing down goals and objectives is taking a big step toward making them happen. The next step will be to actually do these things — and keep a record. This is something as an advocate you can do with your youth together over time.

Writing Goals

Here are some of the kinds of goals a young person might be interested in setting.

- Art/Music/Creativity — what goals do I have for my creative side?
- Education — where do I want to be in several years in terms of my education?
- Relationships — 3 years from now, what do I want my relationships to be like? Do I want more friends? More time with family? A better relationship with my dad? To be married? To be single?
- Spiritual — what kind of spiritual growth or involvement do I see for myself over the next few years?

- Sports/Fitness/Health — if I am successful what will my health and fitness be like several years down the road?
- Work — what direction do I want to go in in terms of my future career?

Example: One young person might write:

In three years from today, I will be:

- In a 4-year college full-time, pursuing a nursing degree
- Living on my own — not married — and not fighting with my father
- Working part time as a nurse's aide or home health aide
- Taking piano lessons
- Working out — more fit
- Active in a church near my college — doing community service

Writing Objectives

Objectives are the smaller steps you take to make progress toward your goal. To be useful, objectives need to answer the question “what will change, by how much, by when?” Usually objectives work best when they are written for the next few months to a year. It's hard to know what will change beyond that time frame, so it's hard to set realistic objectives several years out.

Example

Let's say the youth is a sophomore in high school with a goal of obtaining a BA, some good objectives might be:

- Begin weekly study for the SAT by _____
- Talk with guidance counselor about requirements for admission and what I need to do by _____
- Improve GPA to _____ by _____.
- Get involved in at least _____ (number) of extracurricular activities by _____ (date).

Here's a tip on how to test if your objectives are solid — ask yourself, are they “SMART?”

Smart Goals Are:

Specific — do I know precisely what has to happen?

Measurable — how will I know if I've achieved this objective?

Attainable — is it realistic or do-able?

Result-oriented — will it really move me toward my goal?

Time-limited — does it have a due date?

If your goals are SMART, they're solid — now go start doing them!

S

M

A

R

T



Specific



Measurable



Attainable



Relevant



Time Based



FCRB 2017 Program Goals

We are looking forward to some exciting enhancements for the FCRB program this year! Most significantly will be the implementation of the Electronic Files Pilot Project that is expected to launch in March/April for selected local review boards. All individuals facilitating local reviews will begin receiving the case files electronically beginning in February. Training will be provided to all facilitators and Board Members in the pilot group. The Focus Group, comprised of board representatives and staff members, continues to meet bi-monthly to provide input and feedback for the project. Watch for updates in the coming months.

Additionally, increasing attendance or participation by interested parties is another goal for CAB staff to work on throughout the year. We recognize that the quality of reviews is greatly enhanced when Board Members have up to date information and input from the various individuals involved in the child's case. Often times, boards have limited information which makes it difficult to formulate recommendations in the best interests of the children reviewed by the board. This is an area that continues to be closely monitored and steps will be taken to engage child welfare partners and educate parties about the foster care review process and benefits of having greater participation by those involved in the children's lives.

In-Service Training will continue to be provided to Board Members throughout the year. Topics include: Aftercare Services, Parental Substance Abuse, Educational Advocacy, Mental Health Issues and the annual Security Awareness Training.

As a reminder, if any FCRB volunteer has not completed Security Awareness Training provided in November/December this is a mandatory requirement of the State. All volunteers must complete the training annually. In the past, this was an online training that took about 90 minutes. CAB is now able to offer the training as a 30-minute personal study and 30-minute application training. We hope this makes the process easier for volunteers to complete. Volunteers should contact their coordinator if they have any questions about the Security Awareness training.

Continue to read the CAB Connection newsletter for updates on these program goals and other FCRB related issues throughout the upcoming months. We will make every effort to keep facilitators and Board Members updated along the way.

January



2017

CASA



IOWA CHILD ADVOCACY BOARD
advocating for abused and neglected children in Iowa

FCRB

WEDNESDAY						
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1 What's on your 2017 calendar?	2	3 Set Appt. to visit child.	4	5 Review Bd Rpts	6 Send Email to...	7
8	9 Call CASA Coord.	10	11 Prep LQ Wksheet	12 Visit child	13	14 Remember to write notes
15 Talk about CASA to...	16	17	18 Go to CASA Court Hearing	19	20	21
22	23 Attend FCRB Day	24 Call parents	25	26	27 Plan February	28
29	30	31	1	2	3	4
MAKE	A	DIFFERENCE	IN THE	LIFE	OF A	CHILD!

We look forward to the beginning of a new year. We celebrate 'out with the old and in with the new'. It represents a clean slate ~ new hopes, big plans, and important commitments, all placed on a brand new calendar. But that is often not the case for "our" CASA and FCRB kids. Their lives come to a standstill and their sense of time becomes skewed. The days and nights away from home seem to wear away the possibilities that other children may get to experience. On behalf of those kids ~ THANK YOU for making them a priority in your lives and for putting these children on your new 2017 calendar.